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Chair: Mr. Donckel (Vice-Chair) ..... (Luxembourg)

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Donckel (Luxembourg), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/66/87, A/66/297, A/66/298, A/66/298/Corr.1, A/66/337, A/66/388 and A/66/391)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/66/287, A/66/304 and A/C.2/66/2)

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(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-sixth session (*continued*) (A/66/25)

(h) Harmony with Nature (*continued*) (A/66/302)

(i) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/66/294)

(j) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/66/306)

1. **The Chair**, referring to the discussion that had taken place at the preceding meeting concerning the list of speakers for agenda item 19, said that he had conducted consultations with all major groups and would follow the advice given by the President of the General Assembly: as an interim solution in no way setting a precedent, he would follow the order of speakers as established in the morning, namely, Nauru (on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States), Indonesia (on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Qatar (on behalf of the Arab States), the European Union, and Australia (speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand). The rest of the list would remain unchanged. He thanked the major groups for their flexibility and constructive spirit in seeking a solution to the issue.

2. **Ms. Moses** (Nauru), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States represented at the United Nations — Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Nauru — said that the vulnerability of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) to economic, social and environmental challenges and their lack of capacity to respond to them were major obstacles to the sustainable development of the region, which depended on the health and vitality of the marine environment. For the Pacific SIDS, the "green economy" was in fact a "blue economy". Marine and ocean resources were the basis of the region's livelihoods, food security and economy, and their conservation and sustainable management represented a primary pathway to future sustainable development. Accordingly, the Pacific SIDS, along with Australia, New Zealand, the United Nations Secretary-General and others, had called for inclusion of the blue economy in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, with three priority concerns, namely, enabling the development aspirations of SIDS in relation to the utilization of marine and coastal resources, eliminating overfishing and destructive fishing practices, and increasing the resilience of marine ecosystems to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification. With regard to the sustainable development of SIDS, the Secretary-General's report provided concrete recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation. New, targeted measures to address the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS were clearly required and Nauru would welcome a substantive discussion on those important issues the following year. In addition, the Pacific SIDS, along with the Alliance of Small Island States, were calling for the third convening of a global conference on

sustainable development of SIDS to be agreed upon at the upcoming Rio+20 conference.

3. Nauru's region was heavily dependent on the health of coral reef ecosystems, which were a primary source of food and income. Over 275 million people worldwide, mostly in developing countries and island nations, depended directly on coral reefs for their livelihoods and sustenance. Coral reefs were under increasing stress and by 2030, absent urgent protective measures, 90 per cent would be threatened by the combined impacts of climate change, acidification and other human impacts. Adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on the protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development would be an important tool for sustainable development and poverty eradication in the SIDS.

4. In relation to protection of the global climate for present and future generations, climate change remained the single greatest threat to the survival and the viability of the Pacific SIDS and their efforts to achieve sustainable development goals. The adverse impacts of climate change were already being felt. Every day, people in the Pacific feared that rising seas would wash into their homes and take away their land forever. They welcomed the Secretary-General's historic visit to the Pacific region to see first-hand the full extent of Pacific people's vulnerability to climate change. Yet, they were acutely aware of the continuing gap between ambitious pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the actual amount required according to science to avoid disaster.

5. As the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban approached, the Pacific SIDS were concerned by recent developments both in the work of the Transitional Committee and in pre-conference deliberations, which appeared to signal that a small handful of countries were attempting to undermine the Durban outcome. There was reason to fear that the fragile trust restored in Cancun was being endangered by lack of political will to reach an outcome that would ensure the survival of all nations.

6. The Pacific SIDS were not prepared to be part of an outcome under the UNFCCC that treated them as collateral damage. Their priorities for Durban included agreeing to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, agreeing to a clear and unambiguous mandate for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument to address emissions for all nations under the Convention, clarity on raising the level of mitigation ambition in accordance with science to ensure the survival of all nations, and operationalization of the Green Climate Fund to ensure adequate provision of finance for urgent and long-term adaptation imperatives.

7. For people in the Pacific SIDS, the impact of climate change might ultimately render many of their countries uninhabitable, destroying unique and ancient cultures in the process. Clearly, the survival of States, their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the impact on their neighbours were matters of international peace and security. Security was a basic precondition for sustainable development. The United Nations therefore could not neglect to address the security implications of climate change. The Pacific SIDS had been encouraged by the adoption of a Presidential Statement on the issue by the Security Council in July and reiterated their call for the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to analyse projected security impacts of climate change. It was also necessary to assess the capacity of the United Nations system in order to ensure that it was able to respond to the security implications of climate change.

8. Renewable energy had a key role to play in solving the climate crisis and providing energy security, and, although they bore almost no responsibility for the onset of climate change, the Pacific SIDS had adopted strategies and targets to promote renewable energy. However, the implementation cost of switching to renewable sources of energy was a major barrier. The unique challenges and opportunities of small islands were being ignored by conventional investors, who tended to favour large, centralized projects. Smaller distributed renewable energy systems were more cost-effective than large, centralized generators when the population was scattered over a wide area and across multiple islands. The Pacific SIDS therefore called for special assistance from the international community and financial institutions in the area of renewable energy supply for renewable and affordable alternative clean energy sources.

9. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the convening of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

was very timely, as it would provide a platform for reviewing developments since the 1992 Earth Summit and for addressing the gaps in implementing Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

10. Bearing in mind the lessons learned from the first Earth Summit, the upcoming Conference must promote sustained, equitable and inclusive global economic growth, especially in the developing countries; find an immediate and sustainable solution to the environmental problems; translate resolutions, declarations and plans into concrete implementable actions; and improve the current sustainable development institutional framework in order to promote the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development.

11. Climate change negotiations had entered a critical phase and the future direction of the climate change regime hinged on the decisions to be taken at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention. Preparatory work had been done for the Conference of the Parties and should help to ensure a balanced, comprehensive and meaningful outcome. Developed countries should make more ambitious commitments and set specific and binding targets on greenhouse gas emissions. The outcome of the Conference must recognize developing countries' disadvantages and their need to adapt to climate change, and lead to adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, transfer of technology, capacity enhancement and adaptation and mitigation efforts.

12. The adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) was a landmark in the pursuit of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The ABS regime would help developing countries to promote sustainable use of biodiversity and prevent further loss. Considering the strategic role of biodiversity in sustainable development, ASEAN hoped that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would also strengthen the conservation and protection agenda for biodiversity.

13. Developing countries continued to depend on fossil fuels to support their development efforts and the use of alternative energy sources remained low. There was a need therefore for a common resolve to develop viable sources of renewable energy, for which research and development must be intensified and the necessary financial and human resources assembled. Smart energy management must be advanced to allow for more efficient energy use.

14. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development must initiate concrete action to improve the existing sustainable development framework. The time had come to move beyond words and resolutions to ensure the future of the planet and its people.

15. **Mr. Al-Hamadi** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development were complementary and deserved equal attention. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) to be held in June 2012 should review the progress made, determine ways to help developing countries to achieve sustainable development, reaffirm political support for that process, and address current and potential challenges. It was therefore a matter of concern that developed countries had, in recent negotiations, sought to evade their agreed commitments. Moreover, the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation referred to the need to take further effective measures to remove obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular peoples living under foreign occupation. However, Israel's occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan, Shaba'a Farms, the Kafr Shuba hills and the northern part of the village of Ghajar in Lebanon prevented the inhabitants of those areas from achieving sustainable development.

16. Climate change was expected to have a negative impact on development in the Arab region, particularly with regard to agriculture, vegetation and biodiversity, with potential repercussions for food security and vital economic investments, not to mention the social consequences of migration. In order to confront those effects, the international community should show solidarity and take effective action based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, focusing on assistance to developing countries, particularly least developed countries, and reaffirming the historic responsibility of developed countries. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change remained the principal and appropriate context for multilateral negotiations in that regard. Through comprehensive, transparent and consensus-based negotiations, the seventeenth session of the Conference

of the Parties to the Framework Convention in Durban should endeavour to secure support for an equitable international approach to climate change based on the Kyoto Protocol and long-term cooperative action under the Convention. Developed countries should take a leading role, notably through technology transfer and capacity-building.

17. Agriculture and biodiversity in the Arab region were also endangered by desertification, which should be addressed through comprehensive international efforts, awareness-raising, national capacity-building and technology transfer programmes. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification should be strengthened by providing resources for relevant projects.

18. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Nagoya in 2010 had underscored the importance of biodiversity. The right of developing countries to benefit from their natural resources should be defended, and incentives should be made available for the preservation of biodiversity. The Group emphasized that every State had full sovereignty over the genetic resources, knowledge and traditional practices in its territory.

19. The Group took note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/66/297). The Committee should give due attention to the topic and highlight Israel's disregard for General Assembly resolutions requesting it to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Governments of Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic for the effects of the oil slick, which had been caused by a barbaric Israeli strike on the Jiyeh power plant.

20. **Mr. Zampetti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro; stabilization and association process countries Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and in addition Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, said that the European Union and its Member States had provided their inputs for the outcome document for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which should strengthen coherence and enhance the linkages between the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

21. The two conference themes — green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development — offered a unique opportunity to address current challenges with a view to reshaping the future. However, success would require imagination, boldness, political commitment and creativity.

22. In order to give fresh impetus to sustainable development, the Conference would need to agree on a shared vision of change, able to deliver results within agreed time frames. Its main operational outcomes should include a green economy road map with specific goals, objectives and actions at the international level, as well as a package of reforms, including upgrading the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the status of a specialized agency for the environment, leading to strengthened international environmental governance as part of a more balanced and effective international framework for sustainable development. Governance aspects of the economic and social pillars of sustainable development must also be taken into account, while also seeking better linkages between the three pillars and improved implementation of existing commitments.

23. Reinforcing the architecture for sustainable development governance at the global level would require, in particular, the strengthening of and better coordination between the relevant United Nations organizations. That would also require reinforcing and mainstreaming environmental issues in a balanced manner, without neglecting social issues. Contributing to the preparations for Rio, a conference to be held in Bonn on the following month would address the interconnections between water, energy and food security in order to develop integrated solutions.

24. Success at the Rio Conference would require building partnerships, focusing on the implementation of sustainable development in the field, and making the means of implementation available. Beyond traditional development assistance, there was a need for innovative sources of finance, taking stock of the results of the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Busan. The private sector, which stood to benefit from the opportunities of the

green economy, would need to play its part and developments in the global economy over the previous two decades suggested that all development partners, including new and emerging ones, would need to do their fair share.

25. Climate change was a global threat requiring a global response. The Cancun Agreements had been significant; the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on climate change in Durban must be another step forward. The commitments undertaken by countries so far with respect to national emissions targets and mitigation measures represented an important step towards achieving the 2-degree objective, but further efforts were still needed.

26. The Durban conference must provide a clear road map and timeline towards a new comprehensive, robust and legally binding framework. The European Union was open to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol as part of the transition to such a framework. In addition, the Conference should operationalize the Cancun Agreements, including those on measurement, reporting and verification (MRV), provide an effective design for the Green Climate Fund and address remaining key issues.

27. Pursuant to its commitments under the Copenhagen Accord, the European Union had mobilized €2.34 billion in Fast-Start Finance for developing countries in 2010 and was well on track to meet its €7.2 billion pledge for 2010-2012. That should ensure maximum transparency and timely reporting on Fast-Start funding.

28. The European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to establish the High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, and hoped that the Rio conference would build on that initiative. The European Union continued to support the international community's efforts to promote renewable energy in developing countries. In that regard the Africa-European Union Energy Partnership had set concrete, ambitious targets for energy access and renewable energy.

29. International biodiversity policy would also remain very much at the centre of thinking in the coming year, especially in the run-up to the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Hyderabad.

30. The European Union had already made good progress towards achieving many of the Aichi targets, in particular through its new biodiversity strategy. That strategy was in line with global commitments made in Nagoya in October 2011 and should guide the European Union towards its own ambitious target of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020 and restoring them as far as feasible. In particular, the European Union was strongly committed to the ratification process and full implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. Indeed, most members of the European Union signed the protocol and implementation work had already begun. The European Union supported developing countries in implementing the Aichi-Nagoya outcomes and the Nagoya ABS Protocol, as conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services were crucial for poverty eradication.

31. Important progress had been made towards setting up the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) at the first session of the plenary in Nairobi. IPBES was a key priority on the global agenda and the European Union was committed to its full operationalization.

32. The recent Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) had taken important decisions strengthening the implementation of the Ten-Year Strategy for 2008-2018, and providing a concerted approach to effectively meet the challenges of desertification and land degradation. Enhanced scientific support was needed in order for UNCCD to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge on desertification and land degradation. In that regard, the European Union actively supported the initiative on the economics of land degradation as a means of developing a clearer understanding of the full costs of land degradation.

33. The third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in May 2011, was a major milestone in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the members of the European Union had developed and were implementing strategies on disaster risk reduction and prevention, and on building disaster resilience, both inside and outside the European Union.

34. **Mr. Thomson** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development approached, it had become clear that many of the challenges facing humanity required global solutions. The Conference would be a crucial and timely opportunity to find ways to set the world on a more sustainable course and to decide on practical outcomes that integrated the three pillars of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental. The international community must focus its energies on developing practical initiatives supported by a strong and flexible institutional framework to respond to new and emerging challenges, implement existing commitments and promote research, innovation and cooperation. The Conference must also overcome the divides between developed and developing countries and deliver initiatives which empowered the most vulnerable to participate in the solutions. Developed and developing countries alike must cooperate in order to achieve global sustainable development. Canada, Australia and New Zealand looked forward to continuing participation in the preparations for the conference. While the Second Committee had important work ahead of it, it was important to avoid prejudging the outcomes of the dedicated Rio preparatory process — a process that the Committee itself had set in motion.

35. It was essential to recognize marine and coral reef conservation and management as an urgent sustainable development priority. Hundreds of millions of people relied on the marine and coastal environment for food, livelihoods, ecosystem services, recreation and economic opportunities. But the oceans were increasingly under pressure from threats such as climate change, acidification, overfishing, biodiversity loss, habitat loss and pollution. Key ecosystems might soon reach critical thresholds, disproportionately impacting people and communities that were most vulnerable, such as small island and coastal developing countries. The Secretary-General's report on coral reefs (A/66/298) contained forecasts of dire consequences if no protective action was taken.

36. Pacific island States were putting forward the "blue economy" as a focus for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Canada, Australia and New Zealand supported a "blue economy" approach which recognized that marine resources and ecosystems were a foundation for sustainable development for many countries, particularly small island developing States. Pacific Ocean countries supported the need for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to recognize the importance of practical actions to improve conservation and management of marine resources and ecosystems. That would be a contribution to food security, livelihoods, economic opportunity, conservation, climate change resilience and natural disaster mitigation.

37. The upcoming conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban was an opportunity to take concrete steps to implement the Cancun Agreements. A new global climate regime must include legally binding mitigation commitments by all major economies. Fast-start financing pledges were already flowing to provide much-needed mitigation and adaptation support to developing countries.

38. Australia, Canada and New Zealand were firmly committed to reducing their carbon monoxide emissions, recognizing that the world's prosperity depended on global progress towards a more sustainable future.

39. **Mr. Alimov** (Russian Federation) said that his country was participating actively in efforts to implement Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the 2002 Earth Summit and 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. It was essential to provide guidance for the Preparatory Committee for the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro so as to enable the Committee to develop a balanced approach to the priority items on the agenda, including the transition to a green economy, taking into account the real possibilities of achieving sustainable development in the long term. The General Assembly's decisions should endorse the preparations made so far and encourage all to cooperate in making Rio+20 a success.

40. The failure of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2011 to agree on a package of policy recommendations on the issues included in its current two-year cycle was a matter of concern. The problem lay not in the Commission's structure and procedures but in the lack of willingness on the part of members to reach compromise solutions.

41. His delegation welcomed the results achieved at the eleventh special session of the UNEP Governing

Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. UNEP continued to play a key role in addressing contemporary environmental problems and its potential contribution was far from being fully realized. That fact should be kept in mind in discussions about reform of United Nations activities in the field of environmental protection.

42. The successful outcome of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests underscored the importance of the Forum as the leading player in promoting and coordinating international cooperation on forests. The documents adopted at that session setting forth guidelines and priorities for international cooperation in sustainable forest management were important inputs for Rio+20.

43. The Russian Federation was prepared to work actively towards an agreement on an international regime for cooperation on climate for the period beyond 2012 on the basis of the outcome of the Cancun meeting of the States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention's targets for reduction of greenhouse gases could be met only if all countries did their part, taking into account their real capacities and their level of responsibility for climate change. Measures to counter climate change should be seen as part of a broader effort to promote the transition to a green economy, which would require a shift towards greater energy efficiency and reductions in resource consumption.

44. The recent High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Desertification had served to underscore the importance of the Convention to Combat Desertification as one of the central environmental conventions and an important tool for achieving global targets for social and economic development and poverty reduction. The Convention should be strengthened by encouraging universal accession to it and by building up the regional component of cooperation under the Convention.

45. International cooperation in preventing and mitigating emergencies caused by natural disasters was of the utmost importance. Further efforts were needed to improve coordination of collective responses, make modern technologies for dealing with natural and man-made disasters widely available and develop mechanisms for the use of such technologies for the benefit of humankind as a whole.

46. His delegation urged speedy action to achieve the targets set out in the concluding documents of the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. In that connection, it welcomed the results of the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and was prepared to work in the period ahead for the strengthening of the Global Platform.

47. **Ms. Wu** Ye-Min (Singapore) said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development must serve to identify the gaps in the sustainable development infrastructure, address why they existed and determine how they could be effectively tackled. An example of such a gap was the lack of political will to strengthen UNEP and provide it with the support it needed to fulfil its mandate.

48. The Conference should also study the initiatives and measures that had and had not worked in order to continue to build on successes and avoid repeating mistakes. It might seek answers to the question why the Commission on Sustainable Development had been able to attract high-level representation when it was first established but not in recent years, and why it had failed to reach an outcome twice in its previous three cycles.

49. A third area for reflection was the work of the Second Committee in promoting sustainable development. It was doubtful whether negotiating multiple sustainable development resolutions every year, including on issues where the primary forum was clearly not the General Assembly, helped to move the sustainable development agenda forward. The sheer number of such resolutions, made it difficult to ensure coherence, let alone adopt a holistic approach to implement sustainable development.

50. It was only by looking at the hard questions that real answers to problems of sustainable development would be found. Creating new structures and bodies could work only if Member States understood where they had gone wrong with the existing framework. Otherwise, the answers would be placebos that would not improve the current system and could even further burden it.

51. Further, coordination at the national level was key to greater coherence and coordination in the sustainable development framework. It was futile for the United Nations to call for greater coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions if Member States' own

representatives in those institutions were not calling for such coordination with the United Nations.

52. There was likewise a need to go beyond the usual negotiating rituals and rediscover the spirit of Rio in 1992. Nations must seize the moment and bring together Governments, citizens and businesses to implement Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Sustainable development needed to be integrated into the lifestyles of the twenty-first century.

53. Sustainable development must be pursued at all levels, including at the United Nations. In that regard, a proper paper recycling system and more options for non-plastic food and drink containers were needed.

54. **Mr. Jimenez** (Nicaragua) said that the world was going through a crisis that threatened the future of humanity and Mother Earth. The crisis had been created by a selfish and irresponsible model of unbridled growth and consumption and unsustainable production. As citizens of the world and custodians of the same common house, all should shoulder the responsibility of saving mankind by urgently embracing a sustainable way of life that would preserve the world for present and future generations.

55. For Nicaragua, sustainable development meant access for all to water, sustainable management of forests, food security and sovereignty, universal access to education, health and peace. Nicaragua's commitment to promoting sustainable development was focused on the human person. Direct citizen participation and social equity were necessary conditions of such development. Nicaragua had consolidated the process of reconciliation and national unity and was pursuing responsible sustainable development of its natural resources for the benefit of all Nicaraguans.

56. The Government's economic strategy stressed increased production and social progress and had enabled the country to achieve the highest GDP growth in Central America and to score successes in combating illiteracy and malnutrition. Thanks to Nicaragua's participation in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), invaluable economic and social programmes were being carried out for the benefit of the poorest segments of the population.

57. Nicaragua's achievements were, however, threatened by the impact of climate change. Central America was highly vulnerable to the adverse climate trends, as could be seen in the recent flooding that had caused significant loss of life and damaged or destroyed infrastructure. Nicaragua was grateful for the help provided by the Palestinian Community in Nicaragua, Cuba, Canada, Brazil, Spain, Iran, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico and Taiwan, as well as the World Food Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and the unwavering solidarity of ALBA. That spirit of solidarity and cooperation should prevail at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development so that mankind could take a giant step into a future of peace and well-being in harmony with Mother Nature.

58. **Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia) said that, although progress towards sustainable development had been made on many fronts since the first Earth Summit in 1992, the pace of such progress had been slow, while the rate of environmental degradation had increased despite the international community's efforts to reverse that trend.

59. Malaysia had recently proposed that the creation of a World Environment Organization (WEO) be discussed at the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in hopes that such a body could address the weaknesses and challenges of the institutional framework for sustainable development. The proposed new specialized agency should not act as regulatory body, but rather should work within the agreed Rio principles. It should be a consultative and facilitative body, helping countries meet international commitments derived from mutual arrangements, including through on-the-ground implementation support to developing countries. The new specialized agency should also be given a mandate to promote synergies of existing multilateral environment agreements and establishment of new treaties, and it should be equipped with more stable and secure financing for the environment.

60. Malaysia was also of the view that the other two pillars of sustainable development, namely the economic and social, should be strengthened and that the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, including their institutional requirements, should be further enhanced.

61. Since 2009 Malaysia had been working to build greater public awareness of green technologies. In 2009, it had introduced a "Green Technology Policy" to promote technology that would be less harmful to the environment and had established a Ministry of Water, Energy and Green Technology reflecting its readiness to pursue sustainable development through the use of new and environmentally friendly technology.

62. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would be a unique opportunity for the international community to lay the foundation for the attainment of sustainable development and to forge the strong political will needed to enable Member States to move forward and fulfil their commitments.

63. **Ms. Webber** (United States of America) said that as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development approached, some aspects of the conference modalities would be decided in the draft resolution that the Second Committee would adopt on implementation of Agenda 21. The draft resolution should provide for a practical, inclusive structure for the Conference that encouraged meaningful dialogue leading to action. The United States wished to work towards a constructive and action-oriented outcome that made a difference at the national level. The result of the Conference should be a short, focused political document that was positive about the opportunities for the future and realistic about common challenges. Care should be taken to avoid the temptation to make the Conference all things to all people by increasing the number of items to be addressed.

64. It was also important to be mindful of other international processes that were addressing related issues, including climate change, desertification, biodiversity, energy and water issues. The integrity of the Second Committee should be upheld by focusing on substantive issues and meaningful outcomes within existing agenda items. Efforts in 2011 should focus on the conversations, meetings, dialogues, and preparations taking place around the globe, both Government- and stakeholder-driven, so as to ensure the success of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

65. All over the world, people faced serious risks because of global climate change. No single nation could address that challenge alone, and countries around the world needed to reduce their emissions and work to adapt to the changing climate. The United States had always maintained that global problems required global solutions. Through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community had made unprecedented progress over the previous three years to address climate change.

66. The United States supported the outcomes from Copenhagen and Cancun. An approach reflecting specific undertakings by all of the major economies went beyond the outdated notion that only developed countries undertook specific actions to reduce their emissions. At the seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention in Durban the world should build on the progress made over the previous two years by taking new decisions to advance the balanced package of the Cancun Agreements towards an effective global response to the climate change challenge.

67. The United States viewed the pursuit of new and renewable sources of energy as a domestic and foreign policy priority and placed great value on international cooperation. Innovative technologies and initiatives, ranging from energy efficiency to renewable energy and cleaner fossil fuels, were all necessary pieces of a balanced portfolio of energy options. The United States welcomed efforts to share best practices and identify a range of solutions to encourage increased adoption of renewable energy technologies.

68. Investment in research and development for all major renewable energy technologies was needed to encourage innovation, reduce costs, and expand the reach of new ideas. Creating an enabling environment with those aims was vital, and the work of bilateral and multilateral renewable energy initiatives, such as the new International Renewable Energy Agency, as well as that of the various United Nations bodies was essential.

69. The United States was delighted to see strong interest in the General Assembly's high-level event on desertification. The humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa had brought home to the world the compounding effects of desertification. At the recent session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Changwon, Republic of Korea, nations had strengthened regional cooperation on desertification, resolved a long-standing issue related to arrangements

for the Global Mechanism and continued to enhance the role of science related to dryland issues. The United States would continue to support the resolution and to defend the scope of the Convention.

70. Given the trend towards rapid urbanization, especially in the developing world, sustainable and inclusive cities were needed, but it was also important to address both the opportunities and the challenges of urbanization in development strategies. To that end, the United States was working to ensure that UN-Habitat and other important actors were well prepared to help Governments and their citizens to take their next steps creatively, responsibly and efficiently.

71. UNEP played an important role in global environmental matters and provided an extremely valuable forum for discussing the issues. UNEP had made progress in a number of areas, including strengthening its science function, cooperation within the United Nations system, and its emphasis on capacity-building. In addition, the UNEP dialogue on environmental governance would be important to consideration of the Conference theme of "the institutional framework for sustainable development". At the Conference, the United States would seek a strengthened role for UNEP with a view to achieving a more integrated and balanced approach to the three pillars of sustainable development within the United Nations system. The Second Committee should not prejudge the outcome of those discussions. Member States had a common priority for UNEP: enhancing its ability to support and encourage national efforts to safeguard the global environment as a contribution to the pursuit of sustainable development.

72. **Ms. Volken** (Switzerland) said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would bring sustainability issues back to the top of the international agenda. At the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the international community had already sketched out a development path taking into account the social, economic and environmental dimensions. There had been progress in striving for sustainable development, but important gaps remained and development overall was still far from sustainable; too many were left out and the world's resources were reaching their limits. Therefore, the upcoming Conference was a timely opportunity for nations to renew their commitment to sustainable development. The thematic agenda should help to focus discussions and to lay the groundwork for a meaningful outcome. The Second Committee had a contribution to make to the Rio process and the conference outcome.

73. With regard to Agenda 21, it was of great importance to capitalize on the work undertaken and the experience gained in the Marrakech Process, as well as on the expertise of UNEP and other United Nations entities in sustainable consumption and production. Achieving sustainable consumption and production would drive the transition to a green and sustainable economy. There was therefore a need to build on the valuable work that had already been done in order to get a practical outcome on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication at the Rio Conference.

74. With regard to UNEP, the Nairobi-Helsinki outcome on strengthening international environmental governance was vital for the discussions on strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the Rio Conference, which should result in ambitious and concrete reform measures.

75. The resolution that the Committee would adopt on biodiversity should note the holding of the first part of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Nairobi and the significant progress made. Consensus on the establishment of the platform could be reached during the second meeting. The plenary's call for offers from potential host institutions was a sensible approach to create the basis for an open and inclusive platform.

76. Incorporating lessons learned from disaster risk management in policymaking could contribute to sustainable development. The UNEP Governing Council had decided to strengthen awareness of the environmental dimensions of natural and man-made disasters and had called for closer cooperation between UNEP and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and other actors.

77. **Ms. Mesquita Pessôa** (Brazil) said that the world was at a crossroads. In the preceding 20 or so years, the primary-products economy had become decoupled from the industrial economy. In the industrial economy itself, production had become decoupled from employment. Capital movements rather than trade had become the driving force of the world economy and unregulated private capital flows had made

macroeconomic stabilization much more challenging. In short, the world had become increasingly integrated, leaving little room for countries to jump-start their development in relative isolation.

78. Global food, energy and financial crises had exposed the systemic flaws in the functioning of deregulated global markets and required Governments to step in to address those crises. As noted in the 2010 World Economic and Social Survey, future prosperity would require major reforms in global economic governance and new thinking about global economic development, focusing on sustainable development. With world population having just reached 7 billion, nations could choose to repeat neo-Malthusian arguments or to recognize the need for solidarity, equity and sustainable patterns of production and consumption, with the developed countries taking the lead.

79. As host country of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Brazil was convinced that multilateralism was the best way to engage the international community in the search for solutions to the great challenges it faced globally. The Conference constituted a unique opportunity for countries to set the sustainable development agenda for the next 20 years. It should give the highest priority to poverty eradication. Countries should remain open to the new opportunities that might arise in an inclusive green economy that responded to national priorities and specific circumstances of each country and that might create jobs and build resilience in the conservation of natural resources, thus laying solid foundations for intra- and inter-generational equity. The institutional framework for sustainable development should favour practical and effective solutions and foster accountability in the pursuit of sustainable development at various levels, while enhancing the reach and capacity of the United Nations system to support implementation on the ground.

80. **Mr. Hashim** (Saudi Arabia) said that all Member States should promote sustainable development in compliance with the Rio principles, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. They should work together to implement Agenda 21, including through the provision of adequate financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, in accordance with the relevant international commitments. Climate change was inextricably linked to sustainable development and required a comprehensive approach. It was therefore the responsibility of the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary organs, including the Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme. Any involvement on the part of the Security Council would go beyond its mandate and could jeopardize consensus.

81. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the appropriate forum for tackling the issue. Developed States should take prompt action to comply with their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, and States that had not yet ratified the Protocol should do so without delay. And agreement was needed in order to extend those commitments.

82. In order to realize Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), effective programmes should be developed in order to manage biodiversity for the benefit of the poorest. Saudi Arabia had announced a donation of $300 million for a fund to research energy resources, the environment and climate change. The Saudi Development Fund had pledged $500 million in preferential loans for projects assisting developing countries and least developed countries to gain access to energy. A further $500 million was being donated to the World Food Programme.

83. **Mr. Abedelaziz** (Egypt) said that in spite of some positive signs, the world economy remained in an uncertain state, marked by unemployment, trade barriers, and high external debt in many developing countries. Moreover, climate change was having catastrophic effects on food production and prices triggering a devastating food crisis in East Africa and beyond. Multilateral action was required if a more resilient world economy based on sustainable development was to come into being. A more integrated approach incorporating the economic, environmental and social aspects was needed so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

84. His delegation hoped that the upcoming Conference on Sustainable Development give renewed impetus to sustainable development for the next 20 years and beyond, through the preparation of an international, long-term, action-oriented agenda that would include the establishment of clear mechanisms for follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the commitments made at all previous United Nations conferences on economic matters and any new commitments made at the Rio+20 Conference.

85. The reluctance of developed countries to fulfil their commitments in the economic, social and environmental fields and their attempts to renegotiate commitments agreed by consensus were cause for concern. Much stronger political will was needed to ensure that sustainable development was achieved on the basis of past and new agreed principles and objectives.

86. States had failed to act collectively in a responsible and integrated manner to the challenges of climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the primary intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. Agreement must be reached on a just international system dealing with climate change on the basis of the Kyoto Protocol and the long-term cooperative action mechanism. Concrete measures were needed to ensure the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. Energy production was also a great priority; the United Nations needed to move urgently towards shaping a comprehensive energy agenda that included the creation of an effective mechanism for the transfer of advanced energy technologies, particularly in the field of new and renewable energy.

87. Agriculture was becoming increasingly vulnerable to climate change, exacerbating land degradation and contributing to water scarcity. The importance of investing in agriculture, especially sustainable agriculture, was paramount as current technology and practices could not increase food production sufficiently to feed 7 billion without worsening greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution and land degradation. Proper management of water resources was essential to social and economic development, poverty reduction, equity and sustainable environment.

88. Addressing land degradation, drought and desertification should be a priority in dealing with several global policy challenges. Desertification had its greatest impact in Africa, which was afflicted by frequent and severe droughts. Recently, the Horn of Africa had been hit by the worst drought cycle in 60 years. The United Nations had officially declared famine in the region. Desertification must be a high priority issue at the Rio+20 Conference, on an equal footing with climate change, biodiversity, food security, energy, water and other challenges of a global nature that required concerted global action.

89. Only an integrated approach to sustainable development, incorporating its economic, social, and environmental dimensions, would ensure progress in addressing the multiple and interrelated crises and challenges the world faced. That perspective should be reflected in the Second Committee's discussion of the agenda item on sustainable development, by, for example, revisiting the structure of the agenda item so that it was not restricted to environmental issues and incorporated economic and social issues related to the achievement of sustainable development.

90. **Mr. Laguna** (Mexico) said that it was important to secure significant results on the two central themes to be discussed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. That objective, however, could not be attained if financial contributions for the Conference were insufficient to ensure the full and proactive participation of countries in the preparatory consultations and in the Conference itself.

91. The transition to sustainable development required robust and efficient international machinery. Mexico therefore attached great importance to strengthening the existing United Nations institutional machinery for managing sustainable development and environmental protection, in the light of lessons learned, including the experience of the Commission for Sustainable Development. Mexico believed that Rio+20 should adopt decisions on the four main aspects of that institutional framework: first, integration of the three pillars and definition of an agenda for sustainability; second, strengthening coordination between United Nations agencies so as to discontinue separate discussion of development and sustainable development, treating all development as sustainable; third, fostering vertical integration of each of the three pillars, economic, social and environmental; and fourth, ensuring fulfilment of commitments assumed and those to be assumed at the Conference.

92. With regard to climate change, the Cancun Agreements would not bear fruit unless they were made fully operational at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban. The Conference of the Parties should turn the institutions created in Cancun into a reality in order to maximize cooperation for development and combating climate change. It was hoped that the Durban conference would agree on a transition period

from the Kyoto Protocol and a strengthened regime for climate change consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities.

93. Incorporating resiliency in all dimensions and levels of sustainable development was a priority for Mexico. Mexico supported the work of the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the results of the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

94. With regard to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Mexico recognized the progress achieved at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on desertification, which had focused the attention of the international community on a comprehensive and shared approach to the three Rio conventions.

95. The twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme had concluded with the adoption of important decisions on the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; on Global Environmental Governance; Financing Options for Chemicals and Wastes; and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, all of which were relevant to sustainable development.

96. The capacity of UNEP to contend with the major environmental challenges of the times should be enhanced. The status and role of UNEP in the governance of sustainable development should be considered in the preparatory process for the Conference on Sustainable Development, as one aspect of the institutional framework for sustainable development.

97. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) recalled that the oil slick that had spread over the entire Lebanese coast as a result of Israel's premeditated bombing of the oil storage tanks of the Jiyeh electric power plant during the Israeli aggression against Lebanon in the summer of 2006 had caused a grave and continuing environmental and economic disaster. Owing to the prevailing winds and sea currents, the oil slick, documented by satellite images, reports of the United Nations Environment Programme and numerous other international entities, had spread north to his country, polluting extensive portions of its coast. Despite repeated General Assembly resolutions (61/194, 62/188, 63/211 and 64/195) calling on Israel to assume its responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries affected by the oil slick, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel had yet to acknowledge its responsibilities, a matter regarding which the Secretary-General had expressed grave concern in his most recent report on the matter (A/66/297).

98. Israel's failure to implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions in blatant defiance of the will of the international community was part and parcel of its policy of non-compliance with international resolutions and considering itself above the law. During the current session, the Assembly must therefore make every effort to convey to Israel its clear condemnation and outright rejection of such hostile and irresponsible behaviour, and reiterate the demand that Israel assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic for the environmental damage caused by the spread of the oil slick.

99. Members of the Committee should reject Israel's attempts to disguise its non-compliance by submitting draft resolutions on sustainable development. His delegation hoped that future reports of the Secretary-General on the issue would include more specific conclusions and recommendations in order to highlight Israel's failure to comply with international resolutions and the need for it to provide compensation.

100. **Mr. Muñoz** (Peru) said that the challenges and opportunities faced by both developed and developing countries in pursuing sustainable development called for a change in current patterns of production and consumption, in particular in order to minimize behaviours damaging to the environment such as high energy use. Economic and social development must be geared to reducing poverty.

101. Natural resources, access to energy sources and economic and social development were intimately related to sustainable development. Developing countries, in particular, were facing problems of climate change, loss of biodiversity, deforestation and land degradation — all compounded by recurrent financial, energy and food crises. It was therefore essential, particularly on the eve of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to find

effective ways to implement what had been agreed since 1992.

102. Integrated environmental management and socio-economic activities aimed at promoting competitiveness and regional and global engagement should be built into government policies. To that end, Peru suggested some guiding principles. First, the cross-cutting nature of environmental management meant that activities of public authorities with responsibility for environmental issues should be coordinated and articulated at the national, sectoral, regional and local levels, with a view to pursuing integrated, harmonious, complementary initiatives with optimal results. Second, public initiatives should be subjected to a cost-benefit analysis of the resources invested and the social, environmental and economic returns expected. Third, public initiatives in the environmental sphere should contribute to improving the country's competitiveness while promoting socio-economic development and protection of the public interest. Fourth, public activities should be geared to results-based management and include incentive and disincentive mechanisms to ensure that expected results are achieved. Fifth, with regard to legal certainty, public activities should be based on clear, coherent standards and criteria, consistent over time, in order to ensure predictability, confidence and a gradual approach to public management of environmental affairs. Sixth, continuous improvement should be sought: environmental sustainability was a long-term goal to be reached through gradual, dynamic and continuous efforts. Seventh, public-private cooperation was needed: the pooling of efforts between the public and private sectors, including civil society, should be encouraged with the aim of pursuing common goals and sharing responsibilities for environmental management.

103. In Peru's experience, incorporating such principles in public policies had presented challenges in terms of capacity-building, dispute prevention, and effective compliance with legal mandates. Peru had therefore pursued inter-agency undertakings, decentralization and a search for synergies between authorities, the private sector and civil society. The active participation of citizens, especially from minority or vulnerable groups, was encouraged.

104. That experience had taught Peru the importance of promoting, at the multilateral level, access to mechanisms of technical assistance, transfer of technology and financial resources for strengthening national environmental capacities in the context of international agreements in force. Those lessons were also important for the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

105. The world was facing a situation in which only concerted action by the international community as a whole could ensure ultimate success. Accordingly, Peru called upon Member States to address pressing environmental issues in a constructive, rational, coherent, just and mutually supportive spirit, for the benefit of the world's peoples and of succeeding generations.

106. **Ms. Alraees** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country had made significant progress in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, notably by diversifying the country's sources of income and creating a varied, environmentally friendly economy. The United Arab Emirates was seeking to become a responsible producer of oil by supporting price stability, developing safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies, and working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Income from oil sales was being used to develop solar, wind, maritime and geothermal energy. A national high commission had been established with responsibility for monitoring and addressing climate change, and a range of climate mitigation laws had been adopted. The public and private sectors were cooperating to build Masdar City, a new centre for clean technologies. The country was host to the International Renewable Energy Agency and was developing what would eventually become the largest hydrogen energy plant in the world, which was expected to provide 7 per cent of national energy needs by 2020.

107. The Eye on Earth Summit, which would be held in Abu Dhabi from 12 to 15 December 2012, would provide an opportunity to discuss ways to access environmental data and find coordinated solutions to water shortage, food insecurity and climate change. The United Arab Emirates assisted numerous developing countries in tackling those challenges and was a regular contributor to the relevant United Nations agencies.

108. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that four decades after humankind had first addressed sustainability in

1972 in Stockholm, sustainability had become a development paradigm. However, the impacts of climate change were occurring with greater severity and frequency, reversing some of the progress made in realizing internationally agreed development goals. Countries like Bangladesh were least responsible for climate change, but ironically they bore the brunt of the consequences. It was, however, heartening that the world was more united than before to combat climate change. The seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was scheduled for December 2011 and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) for June 2012. Nations must harness the enthusiasm which existed and translate it into concrete actions. In that connection, equitable geographical representation must be ensured in the various bodies involved in the preparations for the Rio+20 Conference. Agreement at the Conference required that climate change discourse be depoliticized. Ambitious targets should be set for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries must make meaningful and unconditional commitments to reduce such emissions, as should advanced developing countries. The Conference outcome must protect the most vulnerable countries.

109. Adaptation remained key to both survival and development. It would require mobilizing substantial resources globally, regionally, nationally and even subnationally. Such resources should be distributed equitably and the participation of least developed countries in the clean development mechanism should be broadened. Annex I parties should provide further financial support to implement the Nairobi Framework.

110. A future climate change agreement must ensure that least developed countries and other vulnerable countries had access to eco-friendly and cost-effective technologies. A Technology Transfer Board should be established to facilitate technology transfers for sustainable development in the least developed countries.

111. Bangladesh looked forward to a consensus and action-oriented outcome from the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention and urged developed countries to undertake ambitious commitments in line with the Kyoto Protocol in subsequent commitment periods and to ensure that there was no conflict between the first and subsequent commitment periods.

112. The world was facing daunting challenges posed by disasters that were now occurring with greater intensity than before. The phenomena of erratic climate change and soaring global food prices compounded the challenges. Building resilience to natural disasters was vital. Concerted efforts at the national, regional and global levels were paramount. Substantially increasing investment in disaster risk reduction was urgently required to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. Adaptation could benefit from the knowledge and experiences of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) mechanisms. A better integration of DRR and adaptation measures could provide a tremendous boost for sustainable development. Bangladesh supported strengthening the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). The idea of alternative methods of financing, including secondments from agencies and Member States, needed to be carefully considered.

113. Nations must find the courage to save the planet by a pragmatic, holistic approach, working together to ensure that the most vulnerable groups received the support they needed to cope with climate change and disasters.

114. **Ms. Dong Zhihua** (People's Republic of China) said that since the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the idea of sustainable development had been widely embraced; many international treaty mechanisms had been created; and various forms of cooperation on environment and development had been going on. But the objectives set by the 1992 Conference were far from being achieved and countries still faced many challenges in realizing sustainable development. While problems besetting the developing countries, such as lack of finance, technology and capacity, required urgent solution, multiple new challenges had emerged, such as financial and food crises, regional unrest and natural disasters, making the pursuit of sustainable development even more difficult.

115. China attached great importance to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as an important opportunity for the international community to jointly develop a global strategy for sustainable development and hoped that it could fully take stock of the process of sustainable development over the previous two decades, strengthen political will, implement all commitments and adopt an action plan to push forward the course of sustainable development in an all-round manner. The Conference and its

preparatory process should adhere to the Rio spirit and principles, in particular the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", should advance the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced and coordinated way, should respect national ownership in sustainable development efforts and should give priority to addressing the concerns of the developing countries.

116. The Chinese Government strongly supported and was actively preparing for Rio. It had set up a preparatory committee consisting of 29 ministries and commissions, taken an active part in relevant preparatory processes and donated $500,000 to the Trust Fund of the Conference. The Chinese Government and the Conference secretariat had held a high-level symposium in Beijing, where open, candid, comprehensive, in-depth and highly productive discussions had been held on the themes and objectives of the Conference. China stood ready to strengthen cooperation with the rest of the international community to strive for more practical results at the Conference.

117. It was hoped that the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention in Durban would yield comprehensive, balanced, pragmatic and positive results. China was of the view that the Conference must maintain the dual tracks of negotiations on the Convention and the Protocol; adhere to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities"; make the negotiation a process driven by the Parties; and ensure openness, transparency, extensive participation and consensus. In accordance with the Bali Road Map, the Durban Conference should implement the 2010 Cancun Agreements, spell out relevant institutional arrangements and continue with negotiations on outstanding issues. Quantified emission reduction targets for developed States Parties to the Protocol in the second commitment period up to 2020 should be further defined; comparable emission reduction commitments for non-Party developed countries should be defined; and institutional arrangements for adaptation, finance, technological transfer and capacity-building should be put in place so as to support the developing countries in responding to climate change, including Measurement, Reporting and Verification and Transparency arrangements that differentiated between the developed and the developing countries.

118. For China, actively responding to climate change constituted a major strategy for economic and social development and an important opportunity to accelerate the transformation of the mode of economic growth and economic structural adjustment. China had set binding targets of reducing energy consumption per unit of GDP by 16 per cent and CO_2 emission per unit of GDP by 17 per cent, raising the share of non-fossil energy in the primary energy mix to 11.4 per cent and increasing forest carbon sinks. China would make vigorous efforts to control greenhouse gas emission, enhance its ability to adapt to climate change and engage in extensive international cooperation.

119. **Mrs. Espósito Guevara** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the world was on the brink of a new, large-scale economic and financial crisis involving its very model of growth, at the same time that an unprecedented ecological crisis, involving the exhaustion of natural resources and the saturation of the planet's natural carbon sinks, was looming.

120. As a result of the crisis, future generations would have much fewer resources than those that had gone before. If all countries were to grow like the United States, mankind would need six planets. The consumption patterns of the industrialized and capitalist countries were simply not sustainable. The solution was simple and obvious: mankind should consume resources and produce wastes at a rate that the planet and nature could support.

121. The reason why the world was so blindly going the wrong way in spite of the risks was that mankind was living under the capitalist system, which operated on a single premise: maximizing individual gain in the shortest possible time. One inevitable consequence was that consumption of resources and production of wastes could not stop growing. That paradox showed that the crisis was a crisis of the model of growth, which was leading to an ecological crisis with unforeseeable consequences.

122. Those were the dilemmas that would have to be resolved at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. But the solution would not be found in "the green economy". That was a proposal designed to deepen the logic of private profit, bringing everything — air, water, carbon and the functions of nature — into the realm of business. The private sector, whose main concern was not protecting nature but making profits, could not be expected to save the

planet. The so-called green economy model was good for capital but not for the planet, since it sought to create a market of ecosystems that would enable the developed countries to receive payments while evading their commitments.

123. Bolivia wished to make clear that it would not accept under the banner of "green economy" a market-style environmentalism that would put a price on the functions of nature, turning them into a new business sector for private investment and speculation.

124. Under no circumstances would Bolivia accept proposals that would privatize water or increase its cost, or the creation of a world water market for the benefit of private companies. Water was a human right, fundamental to life and to the realization of other rights; it constituted a key resource for development and should be guaranteed by States for the benefit of all citizens, not for the private sector.

125. The solution was likewise not to be found by seeking more efficient technologies in order to continue growing. There was no point in greater technological efficiency if, at the same time, one promoted greater consumption. The aim was to grow at a pace that the planet could sustain.

126. Achieving sustainable development meant ensuring that development did not destroy the Earth's natural cycles, and that meant thinking about other paradigms of development. According to many scientific studies, the previous 50 years had seen the fastest change in the relationship between human beings and nature in history. Human activity had begun to outstrip the workings of the planet's systems in many respects that went well beyond changing temperatures. One of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century would be to restore the balance with nature, reorienting the world economy in such a way as to preserve and restore the integrity and interconnections of the Earth's natural cycles and enabling ecosystems to adapt to current environmental changes and to regenerate and diversify their species. That was what Bolivia understood as the rights of nature and that was the aim of the resolution on harmony with nature that it presented each year in the Commission on Sustainable Development.

127. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should not renegotiate Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; rather, it should strongly reaffirm them. It was fundamental to advance the sovereignty of States over their own resources, the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities, the historical responsibility of the developed countries, international cooperation, and transfer of technology and finance to the developing countries. The major objectives of the Conference should be to achieve a solid commitment to eradicating poverty and restoring harmony with nature. That was the responsibility of the Member States as countries and as inhabitants of Earth, a planet which they had borrowed from succeeding generations but had failed to safeguard.

128. **Ms. Smith** (Norway) said that mankind had made enormous strides in the almost 20 years since the Earth Summit in 1992. World GDP had tripled. Life expectancy had increased by many years in almost all countries. Under-5 child mortality had fallen from more than 12 million to 7.2 million. Hundreds of millions had been lifted out of abject poverty and the middle classes were growing. Still, hundreds of millions had not benefited from globalization and growth and there were unsustainable and increasing inequalities in most countries. Great progress had been made in managing industrial pollution and hazards, but natural resources had come under increasing strain. Increasing food production and securing access to affordable food was a constant challenge. Energy consumption had increased by 40 per cent and the world still relied too heavily on fossil fuels. And that dependence entailed enormous consequences and threats. The world was clearly on an unsustainable path.

129. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development provided a unique opportunity to take a renewed, integrated approach to sustainable development, reconciling growth with social justice and environmental needs. The issues of climate change must be resolved. Many countries seemed unable or unwilling to address those challenges in a responsible manner. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should therefore address a number of issues, namely, energy; sustainable production and consumption; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by preventing deforestation and land degradation; green jobs; and gender equality in promoting sustainable development.

130. Energy use had a bearing on growth, health, education, gender equality and job creation. Providing more energy from renewable sources was a win-win strategy for sustainable development. Norway's energy

and climate initiative known as Energy+ was geared to increasing energy access, accelerating technological change and promoting renewable energy. The Conference should decide on a strategy for following up the Secretary-General's call for "Sustainable Energy for All".

131. Green taxes were important instruments in pursuing sustainable production and consumption. Norway had been a pioneer in that respect since it had imposed carbon taxes on its own petroleum industry in 1991. Despite some initial scepticism, people realized that the carbon taxes had not jeopardized growth and employment, and had proved to be an effective means of encouraging investment in renewable energy and green alternatives.

132. Norway supported the establishment of methods and institutions for facilitating the scaling up of payments for verified emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation, in particular under the REDD+ programme.

133. Green jobs, a key to making the transition to a greener economy, helped to reduce consumption of energy and raw materials, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, and protect ecosystems. All sectors and types of enterprises, in urban and rural areas, and in countries at all levels of economic development, had the potential of becoming greener. Norway supported a socially equitable transition, based on inclusive social dialogue and fundamental principles and workers' rights.

134. High female participation in the formal workforce gave countries a competitive edge. Improving gender equality policies and investing in girls' and women's health and education was therefore not only a matter of human rights but of sound macroeconomic policy and a prerequisite for sustainable development. Such policies would be effective only when women empowered themselves and took part in political life, including in decision-making processes relating to natural resources. Norway would promote the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the outcomes of the Rio Conference.

135. **Mr. Chipaziwa** (Zimbabwe) said that there remained exactly four years to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but many countries, especially in Africa, were not on track to do so. The world faced a myriad of problems ranging from financial and energy crises to the effects of ever-growing poverty. Developing countries, while contributing the least to global financial crises and climate change, were the most affected by them; hence their inability to meet some of the MDGs, including that of ensuring environmental sustainability.

136. As preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development gathered momentum, Zimbabwe believed that it was time to take stock of what had been previously agreed between the developed and developing countries in order to assess progress and the shortcomings encountered. It was time to make good on the commitments made in 1992 and produce tangible results. The Conference also provided an opportunity to assess some concepts such as "green economy", which meant different things to different countries. For the third world, it must not be used as a new trade conditionality that hindered development. "Green economy" should strengthen the linkages between the three pillars of sustainable development for the benefit of developing countries.

137. Despite the financial and economic problems that Zimbabwe had been facing as a result of economic sanctions imposed by some Western countries, the country remained committed to efforts to achieve the MDGs, including that of sustainable development. In Zimbabwe there was widespread awareness of the environment and of activities detrimental to the environment. The establishment of the Environmental Management Agency called for self-monitoring. Increasing requests for air pollution tests and Environmental Impact Assessments by companies showed that the enactment of Zimbabwe's Environmental Management Act was having a positive impact on environmental awareness and management.

138. In the 1980s Zimbabwe had embarked on community-based natural resources management programmes through a home-grown initiative called Community Area Management for Indigenous Resources, stressing forest resources and wildlife, which had spread throughout the country and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. At the regional and subregional levels, Zimbabwe participated in environmental monitoring and natural resources conservation programmes under the auspices of SADC and the African Union.

139. Like other developing countries, Zimbabwe faced the challenges of lack of institutional, technical capacities and limited budgetary resources in its quest

to achieve the MDG for environmental sustainability. The country welcomed development assistance in areas such as the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements; environmental awareness; capacity-building in data collection; analysis and dissemination; exploitation and development of alternative energy sources and provision of clean water and sanitation. In that regard the fulfilment by developed countries of the official development assistance commitments that they had voluntarily undertaken remained key to enhancing capacity-building, scientific, technical and technological capacity and development for developing countries.

140. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that his country was acutely aware of the need to preserve natural sea life for the benefit of all. As rightly stated in the Secretary-General's report, coral reefs provided social, economic and environmental benefits for millions of people. Malta had been the proponent of what had become the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, whose basic principle was establishing the sea as the common heritage of mankind. The Government of Malta had made the marine environment a focus of its work. Malta was proud of the progress it had achieved in sea water quality and sea life preservation. Malta was 95.4 per cent compliant with strict EU bathing water standards and was the only Mediterranean country that treated all waste water before it was discharged into the sea.

141. The Government of Malta had initiated a broad public consultation process concerning all aspects of the environment in order to update the national environment policy. The national policy focused on six main themes: greening the economy; safeguarding environmental health; using resources efficiently and sustainably; improving the local environment; addressing more sustainable forms of agriculture, transport and tourism; and long-term sustainability issues, including climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems, and environment-related emergencies.

142. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should provide the necessary groundwork to re-invigorate environmentally friendly economies and mark the start of a worldwide transition to green economies. Malta supported the enhancement and upgrading of UNEP to make it the United Nations voice on environmental matters.

143. Malta continued to strongly support initiatives to mitigate the effects of climate change, particularly on small and vulnerable island States. It hoped that progress achieved at previous climate change conferences would be consolidated at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Durban.

144. Malta was active in supporting the project on climate change diplomacy of the DiploFoundation, with the aim of strengthening policy capacity of small and developing States, focusing on awareness-raising among diplomats and policymakers. The project had involved over 160 participants in intensive, high-quality online training and research on climate change issues relevant to the participants' countries, and was scheduled to continue in 2012.

145. **Mr. Nakonechnyi** (Ukraine) said that active and constructive preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in particular in the Second Committee, would help to ensure the success of that coming milestone meeting. In that regard, his delegation commended the Economic Commission for Europe and UNEP for their contributions to the preparatory process.

146. Ukraine appreciated the specific focus of the Conference on green economy and poverty eradication, which should be the main goals of sustainable development policies. The Conference should give more balanced and coordinated treatment to environmental issues, take bold and forward-looking decisions on strengthening the architecture of environmental governance, and more vigorously address land degradation, desertification and loss of biodiversity, which threatened food security and triggered social and economic tensions.

147. The High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on land degradation, desertification and drought held on 20 September 2011 had been a good opportunity to advance those important issues on the United Nations sustainable development agenda. Ukraine commended the launch of new global initiatives in that field, particularly the FAO-led Global Soil Partnership for Food Security and European Commission-led Economics for Land Degradation, and looked forward to participating in their implementation.

148. There was a need to reinforce the role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as a key instrument for sustainable land

management in all parts of the world. The recent Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD, held in the Republic of Korea, had made welcome progress in implementation of the ten-year strategy of the Convention. But increased scientific support for UNCCD, especially its Committee on Science and Technology, was needed. More emphasis should be given to actions that enabled synergies between UNCCD and other environmental instruments, promoting regional coordination mechanisms, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, and enhanced participation of civil society. For its part, Ukraine was committed to effective implementation of the Convention. Work was being done to put in place the Programme to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation through 2013.

149. With regard to the issue of biological diversity, his delegation was pleased with the ambitious outcome of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing, soon to be signed by Ukraine. He also commended the Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 which set out clear targets for implementation of the Convention for the following 10 years. Many of those targets had been integrated by Ukraine into its National Plan of Action.

150. Ukraine was committed to achieving sustainable development. It had recently adopted new legislation aimed at adapting national environmental standards to European and international standards and instituting a balanced approach to the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development.

151. In pursuance of the aims of the new legislation, a National Plan of Action on Environmental Protection for 2011-2015 had been adopted, providing a framework for mainstreaming environment into national policies and strategies. Work was under way on a draft "National concept for development of cleaner production and environment technologies through 2020". To that end an inter-agency working group had been formed with experts from the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine, UNEP, UNIDO, as well as representatives of civil society and academia.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.